

Appl. No. 10/765,364
Amendment dated 10/20/05
Reply to Office Action of June 20, 2005

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims (in order with strikethrough and underline):

Claim 1. (currently amended) A device for vacuum sealing a food item package formed from a web of material, the device comprising:

 a first clam shell having a lip and a passage for supplying a vacuum to the lip;
 a second clam shell having a lip and a passage for supply a vacuum to the lip;
 a vacuum supply applied to each of the lips of the clam shells to engage the web to form an air tight chamber;

 wherein the web and the first and second clam shells may be engaged so as to form an air tight chamber; and

~~a means for supplying an air supply for supplying~~ compressed air into the air tight chamber such that the web does not disengage from the first and second clam shells.

Claim 2. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein the lips are curved.

Claim 3. (currently amended) The device of claim 1 further comprising at least one locking mechanism comprising:

 a rotating axle;
 a swing arm rigidly attached to the rotating axle;
 a locking arm pivotally attached ~~to the~~ to the first clam ~~claim~~ shell and the swing arm;

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a second locking arm rotatably attached to the second clam ~~claim~~ shell in the swing arm;
and

such that when the rotating axis is rotated 180° the first clam shell and the second clam shell are engaged to form an air tight chamber.

Claim 4. (currently amended) A method for vacuum sealing a food item package comprising:

enclosing a package portion of a food item packaging web within an air tight chamber;
~~a means for~~ maintaining fluid communication between the package portion and the remainder of the web such that air from the package portion of the web may enter the remainder of the web; and

supplying compressed air to the air tight chamber such that air within the package portion of the web is forced into the remainder of the web while maintaining an air tight chamber.